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INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY. XI.

PART III. GENERAL STRUCTURE OF SOCIETIES.

CHAPTER VII. THE SOCIAL FRONTIERS. (CONTINUED.)

SECTION III. BELIEFS, PRACTICES, AND INSTITUTIONS RELATING TO THE SOCIAL LIMITS AMONG PRIMITIVE PEOPLES. (CONTINUED.)

THE structure of the internal organs always tends toward adjustment. In reality, the frontier line is the expression both of the internal organization and of the relations of that to the surroundings. As, according to Bancroft, the ancient Pueblos of North America, sheltered in their walled villages, went to war only to repel invasion, so their interior state approached a peaceful democracy; they had a governor and council, chosen each year by the people, and were monogamous. This law of correlation between the external structure and the internal organization is, however, only a particular application of the general law of the correlation of the social organs—a law which we shall study at another time.

Heretofore it seems to have been lost sight of in sociology that the frontier, the exterior limit of every society, is a part of the structure of that society, and constitutes the most simple and most general condition of its existence; constitutes, first of all, its successive differentiations.

The phenomena observed in America by Bancroft are found also among the colonists who, having peaceful relations with their neighbors, have limits which are not at all essentially military. The amiable and peaceful tribes of Bodos and Dhimals have high morality and large independence of character; they resist unreasonable injunctions with an indomitable obstinacy; likewise they do not give themselves over to any act of violence against their neighbors; they refrain from similar acts within the group. The peaceful Lephas undergo great privations rather than submit to oppression and injustice; they seldom quarrel; in all cases the disputes are adjusted by chiefs elected from the people; they

make reparations and reciprocal concessions; they forget injuries. The Santal, in his simple spirit, possesses a keen sense of justice, and if one attempts to force him, he prefers to leave the country; the people are virtuous; crimes, and magistrates charged with punishing them, are unknown. Among the Hos, who belong to the same group, it is sufficient that the honesty or the veracity of a man be suspected for him to kill himself. The Santals, the Leptchas, the Alfavons, the Jakuns, are hospitable, obliging, and beneficent; the Bodos, the Dhimals, the Hotchs, the Santals, the Leptchas, are monogamous, chaste, faithful; in general, daughters and sons are equal. Among the Bodos and Dhimals, essentially peaceful, the priestly offices, contrary to Brahmanism, are not hereditary, but belong to all the elders. Among the Santals, however, two of the tribes are especially set apart to religion and furnish a great majority of the priests. Among them a betrothed woman abandons her clan and gods for those of her husband. *A person passes easily from one clan to another, from one tribe to another.* In a word, although there are limits and territorial boundaries for classes and tribes, these limits never assume the form of military frontiers; and, as has been seen, the external situation of these societies is correlative to their internal peaceful organizations, the moral elements of which have especially impressed observers, although that high morality rests primarily upon favorable economic conditions, and upon external conditions on the whole equally favorable.

Reclus says that, although the Santals are agriculturists, they are nevertheless nomads and love to change their place of abode. About two million of them inhabit the valleys of Behar and Bengal. Their moving about is explained, however, by the fact that when the soil they are cultivating is impoverished they move into the jungle to seek other land to be grubbed out. In some districts in which there were only 3,000 people in 1790, there were 200,000 in 1840, and, in spite of themselves, all the land being taken up, they had become sedentary. They had also come into contact with military societies. The Mongols and the English have made serfs of this peaceful and virtuous population, and the moving about that is seen among them now is only the

work of great capitalists and proprietors exploiting their labor. Yet marriages continue to be made between individuals of different classes. Expulsion from the tribe and deprivation of rights common to members of the tribe are the two chief means of punishment. This is true, says the illustrious geographer, among all the original peoples of Bengal—Leptchas, Kotchs, Kohls, etc.¹

Thus, so long as these peoples found among themselves and in their environment conditions favorable to their peaceful development, their exterior frontiers were of little consequence, as were the class distinctions within the group; but when the vacant territory had become scarce through the increase of the population, and when they came into contact with peoples already subjected, their equilibrium of equality and peace gave place to an equilibrium of inequality maintained by force, and which tended not only to their economic subjugation, but also to the destruction of their moral qualities.

In reality, it is not the hunting stage, not the pastoral stage, and not the agricultural stage in itself which is naturally peaceful or naturally warlike; it is only the external and the internal conditions of their development which imprint the one character or the other. We must therefore reject altogether that old hypothesis which explains the militarism of Sparta and Rome by their economico-agricultural hypothesis, of which the legend of the soldier-laborer is a survival. War and peace are inherent in different classes of economic existence; industrial and commercial societies are not from their nature essentially peaceful, contrary to the hypothesis of St. Simon, Auguste Comte, and Herbert Spencer—a hypothesis unfortunately inconsistent with the facts. The truth is that among commercial and industrial peoples, as well as among agricultural peoples, equilibrium and peace depend upon the interior organization and its correspondence to the exterior.

According to von Martins, quoted by E. de Laveleye,² in all North America there did not exist a single race as nomadic as

¹ ELISÉE RECLUS, *New Universal Geography*, Vol. VIII, pp. 327 ff.

² *Property and its Primitive Forms*, pp. 300 ff.

those of the steppes of Asia, except the Murras, who wandered from place to place without having any settled abode. All the other peoples gave themselves to the cultivation of the soil. The frontiers of the Murras, different from those of the other tribes, were movable, but it would be a mistake to suppose they did not exist. I would add that it would be another mistake to suppose that all frontiers are not movable; they are always variable. It remains, nevertheless, true that a frontier can exist, although it be fluctuating. In the example given above, differing in part from others, there is the continual displacement of population and territory which is characteristic; mobility of the frontier only manifests a quite rudimentary mode of adaptation and of social equilibration. When one tribe of the Murras established itself temporarily in a region, the territory of which it took possession was considered by all as the property of the community.

We see very clearly here that in primitive societies the frontiers called political are the frontiers or limits of property. But this property, in the case of which we are speaking, is communistic, and if the society, because of the situation in which it finds itself, is warlike, the economic frontier, and also the other more specialized frontiers, tend to assume a military structure, at once aggressive, coercive, and prohibitive.

Can it be said, then, that the communistic form of property of the horde, the clan, or the tribe will come to be substituted for private property in land, or for other forms of property, to the advantage, economic and otherwise, of the group? Evidently not. The frontier continues, in these new conditions, to represent the organ of envelopment (*enveloppe*), of protection, and of attack; the means of communication for the economic interests, and for other more specialized interests common to the group. In a word, with a content always variable, and under forms equally variable, the function of frontiers is constant, and continues to be represented by constant, but morphologically diversified, organs. The smallest special society has its limits correlative to its organization, just as individual societies have their limits in the great universal society, the forces and forms of which are equally delimited.

From all these facts and institutions relative to their life there result, among these different peoples who have not yet what we call social and political theories, some beliefs, more or less co-ordinated, which are nevertheless the embryo of the theories that we meet in the most advanced states. Thus, the Murras do not comprehend, according to von Martins, that land can belong to an individual. It would follow that this conception of the economic order from the territorial point of view reflects exactly a condition that does not rest upon the existence of territorial limits of the individual or even of the family. There would be only a general and common frontier, as there was only a general and common property. The Murras never permitted a member of a neighboring tribe to settle upon their territory, unless detained there by force. On the other hand, as they were not closely bound to the land they occupied, and as their kind of property did not necessarily imply fixity of tenure of the soil or specific hereditary transmission, their ideas and customs conformed to that economic régime; they quitted their dwellings sometimes without appreciable motives in order to settle in another locality. Defense of the territory they occupied was not for them of capital importance, and in the conditions in which they found themselves their habitual migration was advantageous for the preservation of both the group and the individuals.

In general, hunting populations are the most accentuated types of the communal forms of property, in so far as property is reserved by the tribe. Among them the idea of property possessed by the tribe generally arises from the necessity of marking off the part of the forest which is indispensable to it as a territory reserved for the chase. If some well-cultivated clearings, in a territory of very limited extent, are sufficient for the maintenance of a numerous population, it is not the same for peoples whose game forms almost the sole alimentary source. Sometimes the territory reserved for this purpose extends beyond the areas actually occupied by the tribe. This reserved territory is necessary for the normal development of the group, but it is also that which is exposed to invasions.

Very often the hunting territory of the tribe is naturally

bounded by rivers, mountains, etc. However, rivers and mountains are not impassable barriers. They are above all *material signs* of the frontiers of the group. The error of the theorists has been in considering them as natural frontiers, as indications presented by nature for the fixation, according to a certain plan, of the regions within the limits of which each group is destined to live and develop. This theory was never more than a superficial and metaphysical one, by means of which the jurists and purely political theoreticians attempted to give a material basis to the conception of a natural and immutable order of societies. Neither rivers, nor mountains, nor seas, nor oceans are frontiers traced by nature once and for all and in a definite fashion. Always and everywhere they have been traversed and passed beyond, according to necessities of the internal and external equilibrium of societies. Their defensive character is altogether secondary. Their indicative character is, on the contrary, essential. The territory of the group does not extend beyond the water courses nor over the opposite slopes of mountains so long as the territory thus bounded suffices for the social needs. When these require an extension, it is produced by, or at least produces, the conflict which, according to several modes, military or peaceful, furnishes the basis of a new equilibrium.

What is constant is a limit, and so far as possible, but accessorially, a more or less visible and precise indication of this limit. There is always a frontier even in absence of mountains or water courses. Rocks, cascades, and great trees, easily recognizable, serve as boundaries. From trees as post-indicators, covered with the national colors, the evolution is visible. The one fact remaining true is that the most apparent natural sign-indicators successively give place, as indicators of limits, to purely symbolical and even purely ideal signs, but susceptible of being graphically represented upon a map; as, for example, in Africa, where the limits of certain parts of English, French, Belgian, and German territories are indicated by the enunciation of a simple degree of longitude.

Rivers and mountains in the establishment of frontiers, aside from this indicative nature, which they have in common with

other signs, play only a strategic and military rôle from the standpoint of attack and defense. These are only a historical form, secondary and subordinate in the formation of frontiers. They intervene in the fixation of limits only in order to perturb, by artificial means and by force, the real natural boundaries of social groups—boundaries which are above all social and positive. The military boundaries established in order to favor not only defense, but offense, are far from representing, as we shall see, the reciprocal limits of intersocial actions and reactions.

If neither rivers, seas, oceans, nor mountains, nor even, at certain times, deserts, can prevent continued variations of the intersocial equilibrium, we can then understand the meaning of the evolution of the sign-indicators of frontiers. This evolution is effected by transferring the most apparent physical forms into more and more ideal symbolical signs. This very evolution is favored by the fact that between a great many groups there do not exist any physical or geographical phenomena as considerable as those which have furnished the basis for the theory of the natural frontiers. To illustrate, there are six trees of colossal size still existing in Mexico, being a species of magnolia, at least six hundred years old, which formerly served as the frontier of the state of the ancient king of the Zapotecs. We can still admire them at Etla, Teozacualco, Zaniza, Santiaguito, and Totomochapa. These boundaries were fixed through traditions, that is, through custom and even through formal treaties. When it was a question of establishing limits of this kind, the witch-doctor was called in, who executed some magic ceremonies by beating a drum called *maraca*—a drum peculiar to all the savage people of America—and by smoking long cigars, doubtless in order to drive away, by the noise and smoke, the hostile and malignant spirits. Sometimes baskets, rags, and bits of bark were suspended from these trees in order to render the frontiers visible, violation of which was a frequent cause of war. This rag is the ancestor of the flag around which are still grouped our national forces whose colors are represented upon the boundary posts of modern nations. Among the Murras there appears also to have been a certain understanding in reference to the possession of

territories among the several tribes. When one of these tribes left the country, it ceded its hunting-ground to its neighbors. In this organization of the Murras there was already a certain complexity. There also existed certain private properties marked off, but inalienable; for instance, the houses. However, the latter were themselves owned by one or several families, who inhabit them together, rather than by a particular individual.³

All of the observed facts thus conspire everywhere and always to show that the external frontiers of each group are in correlation with its structure and its internal organization, as well as with the structure and composition of the surrounding groups. The striking similarity of facts, institutions, and beliefs among the most opposite populations is naturally explained by the homogeneity of the existing conditions, and by the laws of adaptation to these conditions, without the necessity of taking imitation into account. Imitation, like invention, is only a derived and subordinate phenomenon. Both appear only as assistants of the natural conditions which alone render imitation and invention advantageous to the group. The same inventions arise spontaneously under like conditions. The fundamental conditions of social life everywhere varying only within certain limits, as I presume to have demonstrated, the same practices, same institutions, and same beliefs are met in analogous stages of civilization, even among populations which have never been in contact with each other and which are ignorant of each other's existence.

Among hunting populations, but among such as are more military than those of which we are speaking, the frontiers, according to Waitz,⁴ in the same way as the internal structure, are much more rigorously established. For instance, the frontiers of the tribes of redskins east of the Rocky Mountains could not be crossed by strangers without authority, and were bounded with great care. The soil was nominally the property of the chief of the community. It was inalienable as belonging not only to the contemporaries, but to future generations. The society, being

³ VON MARTINS, *Beiträge zur Ethnographie und Sprachkunde Amerikas*; I, "Zur Ethnographie" (Leipzig, 1867).

⁴ *Anthropologie*, Vol. III, p. 221.

military, had a chief into whose hands the property passed, but the property remained communal, with a tendency to individualization in the hands of the chief or chiefs. However, confusion persisted between the limits of the state and those of landed property. The latter remained communal, at least by right of possession, but the chief or chiefs were the titularies of it. The exterior and also interior limits of the group become all the more rigid as the internal structure in reference to the external is no longer equal, but authoritative; and according to this internal structure, if it continues to develop in the same authoritative sense, all the special social organs—economic, familial, moral, juridic, and others—will be modeled in proportion to the social development. Each new differentiation produced among the groups in the interior will be a differentiation in the direction of inequality, and of the authority of the groups and individuals in reference to each other.

Everywhere, to an equal extent, these forms of social life have their repercussion in religious beliefs. For example, the real forms of the frontiers, as well as those of the boundaries of the particular groups in the interior, have their reflex in the beliefs relative to the future life. The Chibchas of America, according to Schoolcraft, believed that in the future life each nation would have its own territory where it could cultivate the soil. We find the same belief among hunting populations; and among the one kind as among the other, the organization of the future common or private territories is always commensurate with the organization which exists among the living. There is, however, this reservation, that sometimes the *post-mortem* life represents primitive conditions considered as happier than those in real existence. Hence is formed, within societies having unequal structures, a social ideal at first borrowed from the past, but which, with the progress of sciences, becomes more and more attached to present conditions and to the prevision of the most advantageous forms for the future. Thus from the beyond the ideal redescends upon the earth to illuminate the progressive march of humanity.

In this way is explained how, where the communal equality and peaceful forms have disappeared, they persist or reappear as

ideal. I have already set forth elsewhere that the communistic and socialistic theorists are generally far from being absolute utopians. They are most often attached, consciously or not, to the real pre-existing, or even contemporaneous, states. For instance, in my opinion, the *City of the Sun* of Campanella was closely associated with the descriptions of the empire of the Incas, or Sun empire, which was conquered by the Spanish.

What is interesting and important to note in rudimentary societies is the real identification of property with the territory of the state, and of the boundaries of the former with the boundaries of the latter. This identification has had within very advanced periods in the Middle Ages, and even in modern times, lasting consequences even after the individual property of the soil was in fact already firmly established. For instance, in case of conquest, the conqueror seized not only the government of the conquered state and the state domains, but also the private domains. The invasion of the barbarians into the Roman empire, and the conquest of England by the Normans, were accompanied by forcible seizure of private estates. Private property was a long time in coming to be respected, and this was so in maritime as well as in continental wars. The differentiation between the state and property was very slow in being effected from the economic point of view as well as from that of the moral, juridic, and political, and where it began to be affirmed in our military and inequality societies it was through a violent divorce between private property and public property, between the individual and the state, and even between society and the state. Perhaps in this respect as in many others the future reserves to us at least some apparent returns toward the communal and equality forms, in which society will reduce the state, in so far as it is governmental, to its special and subaltern function. However, the differentiation between the state, the individual, and society ought to be considered as one organic development, though partly deformed through the unfavorable conditions in which it is realized. The whole effort of our contemporaries consists precisely in ameliorating these conditions. Herein is the social question, the *raison d'être* of sociology.

The evolution of primitive communities in a military and authoritative direction, through consequent inequality, sufficiently explains the fact that the original identification of the community with the territory was, from the property point of view, transformed into an identification of sovereignty and of the right of sovereignty, in the same way as property with the right of property. This identification was categorically formulated in a striking way by Hobbes in these terms: "One succeeds to the kingdom in the same manner as to the right of inherited property."⁵ In saying this, Hobbes was only formulating in theory the practical régime in vogue common to property and to sovereignty, and of which the numerous wars of succession in Europe as well as in Asia were the manifestation. In the theory of absolutism of which he was the champion, the population and territory, in fact as in law, belonged to the sovereign, whereas in the original forms the territory and population were confounded in a single combination.

This evolution of sovereignty and property, always in correlation with the boundaries, is observed equally in Asia, America, and wherever great military and inequality societies arise, by reason of circumstances and by being substituted for the previous, partly peaceful and equal, communal forms. The development, not being possible through peaceful understanding, was realized by authority and coercion, by forced co-operation, which was a special form of understanding — a cohesion by compression.

We see the development being effected in this direction in certain societies which are veritable stages of transition between tribes and great kingdoms or historical empires. For instance, Yucatan was an intermediate type between the savage tribes of America and the empire of Peru. We are able thus to follow the evolution in America as well as in Europe in its complete and similar enchainment, from the primitive forms up to the little barbaric monarchies and to the great empires either feudal or unified. The theory of the frontiers follows step by step that of property. The frontiers are inscribed in the facts and institutions, which are much less capable of leading us into error than the

⁵ *De Cive.*, chap ix.

theories properly speaking. The theories are at once more complex and more special, and they assume besides a more or less personal character in harmony with the psychology of their authors. However, the most subjective theories always assume a social character in harmony with the environment which gives rise to them, and this is true even when the theories are opposed to the environment in order to criticise and reform it. In any case, theories and environment are inseparable.

All of the institutions relative to the frontiers that we observe outside of Europe, as well as the corresponding customs and beliefs, present remarkable similarities to the European institutions and ideas, as we shall see after having described and interpreted the facts relative to the great extra-European civilizations which have not formulated their conception into a written body of doctrines.

In the *Evolution of Beliefs and Political Doctrines* I have described the organization of ancient Peru and Mexico which, as the most advanced states of America, should be considered as intermediary types of the spontaneous evolution of societies, and already partly analogous to the great empires of Egypt and Persia. Ancient Peru, by means of confederation and conquest, had attained a considerable degree of development. The empires of Peru and Mexico issued directly from the tribes of redskins. Before the Spanish conquest, Peru had attained to the condition of a state at once communal and quite monarchically hierarchized and centralized. The old territorial divisions of tribes, always fluctuating, had given place to fixed symmetrical administrative districts, almost like the present territorial divisions of the United States. Cuzco, the capital, was itself divided into four circumscriptions, adjusted according to the cardinal points, and exclusively inhabited by people from the corresponding divisions of the empire and distinguished by their original costumes. The new character of these limits and distinctions has the more or less complete substitution of the administrative divisions for the old territorial divisions between the primitive hordes and tribes. Before the formation of this great empire the inter-social limits between the different tribes were above all determined

by the genetic relations of the members of each group, and by the natural environment in which the latter was placed. The sea, as a temporary natural limit and an instrument of circulation and communication, facilitates the internal organization of societies that are poorly equipped for protecting their existence against the outer world. On this account, societies even relatively considerable have been naturally able to fix and consolidate themselves in the Polynesian islands, in Haiti, Havana, Tonga, and Samoa. In ancient Peru, before the domination of the Incas, semi-civilized societies had already similarly established themselves along the coast in regions separated from each other by almost impassable torrid deserts. The situation was the same in the interior of the countries, in regions separated by elevated mountains or by the cold and uninhabitable *punas* (table-lands). These natural limits (natural for the moment) were at once obstacles to the absorption of social groups and a favorable factor for the conservation of the communal and equality forms, thus sheltered from external attack, and in consequence momentarily free from the necessity of a military and authoritative organization—a necessity which is originally imposed upon groups whose territories are easy of access. But, in reality, there are no natural frontiers. There are only social frontiers, that is, frontiers in correspondence with the external and internal conditions of each group. As the internal development of the populations of Peru, prior to the conquest, had naturally brought them to exceed their natural frontiers, so these frontiers were crossed by the conquering tribes of the Incas, who were precisely found in the state of emerging from their own frontiers. They survived all of the originally independent tribes and imprinted upon the new unified organization of tribes a character which, while maintaining the old communal type, developed and stamped upon it the inequality character resulting from conquest. And this inequality character was not alone political. It had a strong economic basis. It was no longer an autonomous group regulating its economic life over its own territory. The laws of the community passed into the hands of the Incas. All of the old so-called natural divisions between tribes were replaced by divisions in harmony with the new social organi-

zation, which, through conquest, tended to effect the fusion of the old genetic tribes by subordinating them to a more extensive group. The old frontiers determined by the mountains, deserts, and water courses gave way to new boundaries. Populations of different origin could inhabit the same city and the same district. The costume alone distinguished those in each district, as in the city they were distinguished by the obligation of dwelling in different quarters. The empire was divided, in the same way as the capital, into four circumscriptions, with four vice-kings. The circumscriptions were divided into departments, the latter into ten, fifty, one hundred, and so on, up to ten thousand inhabitants, with chiefs of tens, fifties, hundreds, etc., as administrators, overseers, and responsible *protectors*.

In Peru centralization was stronger than in ancient Mexico, whose régime was feudal. In Peru there was a chief for every ten men, whereas in Mexico there was one chief for each group of twenty families only. The old genetic relations were therefore partly preserved in the great feudal empire of North America.

The so-called natural or geographical frontiers are thus in reality always social frontiers variable according to the conditions of the internal or external equilibrium of each society. Natural barriers are not the cause of group boundaries, but the effect of the organization of the group in correlation with the surrounding social environments. This is why, at a certain stage of evolution in Asia and Europe, as well as in America and elsewhere, we see divisions appearing analogous to those observed in Peru. There must be some reason for this similarity of development in the different countries. A general law suffices to explain it. This law is that the same social phenomena tend to be produced wherever the social conditions are analogous and in proportion as they are analogous.

In Peru the primitive community of each tribe had fused with all the other communities and ended in a vast communal state, but authoritatively differentiated. The Inca had absorbed all the chiefs of the tribes, just as the empire had absorbed within its limits all the prior and separate territories. The Inca incarnated the state, and it was he who became the proprietor and

manager of the soil and people, as well as the divider and distributor of the materials and results of production. This was, on the whole, in its absolute form a very harmonious organization in all of its parts—a static form strongly equilibrated. The soil itself was divided into three parts, of which one was for the Inca and his family, one for the Sun, that is for the priests, and one for the people. Was this not, on the whole, in effect, though through a partly different process, a repartition analogous to that found existing in France before 1789, at the time when the king and his nobility possessed a third, the clergy a third, and the people likewise about a third of the territory? But in France upon the eve of the Revolution this division was less stable, less symmetrical, and still less the result of an authoritative repartition. The original communal régime had evolved under different conditions, more complex than in Peru. In the latter this repartition of the soil was absolute like the monarchy itself. The monarchy had complete economic, religious, and political sovereignty. Annually an equal allotment was accomplished by means of authority. The conquered people, being the sole laborers, were obliged to cultivate, besides their own lots, those of the royal family and of the clergy. The laborer was attached to the soil like a serf, but not to any particular tract. He passed from one lot to another administratively, for the reason that all of the economic boundaries, as well as the frontiers and political divisions, were likewise administrative. The individual no longer belonged to his genetic group and was no longer attached to the territory of this group. He had become an element of the great community which was in the hands of a chief. Occupation alone was obligatorily hereditary, as it was for a long time also, at least in practice, in Europe. The laborer was forbidden to change his locality or condition without authority. The whole internal organization was, in a word, strictly determined by means of authority, as were the administrative and external limits of the empire. The latter needed to take no account of the natural or geographical boundaries, if they were not within the limit of the state's own forces and external reactions. There are no other

than social frontiers, whether it is a question of a military and absolute empire, or of a pacific and socialistic democracy.

Under these conditions, the forces called moral, but in reality at the same time material, conspired with all the others in the progressive extension of the frontiers of the Inca empire. As today in Turkey, Russia, Persia, etc., the Inca was the supreme head of the religion. The external mission of the empire represented by the autocracy fortified itself by a mission of religious propaganda. By means of war, and even without war, and before the military occupation, the surrounding savage tribes were successively converted to the solar cult. Even the religion preceded the armies, just as the English missionaries have paved the way for military colonization. Finally, the conquered territories were incorporated and their populations annexed and subjected to a common régime. Thus the frontiers always advanced by the assimilation of the territory and peoples beyond rivers and mountains, and even beyond deserts. Indeed, a society can be limited only by the conditions of its own organization or by another society, or, to be more exact, by its own organization in correlation with that of the external societies.

Ancient Peru represented the *summum* of development attained by the primitive communal types under a despotic military and religious form. This type would naturally enlarge, so long as it did not meet on the outside a force equal or superior to its own. It would necessarily be broken up in contact with more powerful forms which were better militarily and industrially equipped. It would even, without doubt, have become dislocated spontaneously, like every one of the great despotic and autocratic empires, through the very extension of its domination, when at a certain moment it proved an insufficient organ of co-ordination between the several parts of the social body. The communal and despotic Peruvian type was violently broken up in the sixteenth century by coming in contact with Spain, but in ancient Mexico, where this communal type had degenerated into a feudal monarchy, it was already profoundly altered. Ancient Egypt also presents to us almost the same viscissitudes, and the Spanish monarchy of the sixteenth century had, besides certain superior-

ities, a great number of affinities with the empire of the Incas. In the latter the worship of the sun was in harmony with the conception of an empire whose frontiers came to be extended wherever the brilliant rays of the divine aster penetrated. Similarly it was said of Charles V. and Philip II. that the sun never sank to rest upon their territories. Spain realized what Peru contained only in germ a world-empire. Was not Louis XIV. at the epoch of his power called the "sun king"? There was something more in this than flattery. It was an imperial conception with assimilations of the limits of sovereignty with those of the solar radiation. This conception had its remotest origin in the beliefs of populations still savage, but in which the communal form existed along with military authority. For instance, the chiefs of the Huron tribes bore the name of the sun, and those of the Natchez the title of sun kings.

Everywhere and always, the limits of power are at least instinctively conceived as the resultant of the composition and organization of the internal forces in equilibrium with the composition and organization of the external forces. However, in this estimation each group, especially the group that is widespread, has the illusion that its power is illimitable. The illusion, in reality, is only an abstraction made from the reaction of the other forces; a constant, but variable reaction which produces at each moment a state of unstable equilibrium, which always announces new changes.

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[*To be continued.*]